

Collaborative Constructions: Constituency, Power, and Engagement

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Abstract

This paper explores efforts of the Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC) to: (1) increase the commitment to community engagement at Coppin State University, an HBCU situated in the heart of one of Baltimore's most challenged communities; and, (2) increase the community's capacity to engage the university, and other institutions, concerning the development and implementation of the Greater Rosemont and Mondawmin Area master plan (the GRAMA Plan).

"Most of the time Universities come to the community to engage them with only their agenda in mind. That is not true community engagement. True community engagement takes place when the university engages the community around not only their agenda, but around the community's agenda also."

(Mortimer Neufville, President of Coppin State University, June 2013)

This paper explores university-community relations between Coppin State University (CSU), a historically Black university in Baltimore, Maryland, and the Coppin Heights community in which it exists. In this case, class differences and spatial contestations emerge as primary causes for disharmony; however, racial and cultural similarities are marshaled for mutual benefit. As a university, CSU currently struggles with retention and graduation rates and associated budget shortcomings. As a community, Coppin Heights is among Baltimore's lowest in income and highest in associated ills. The procedural model presented here concerns the formation of university-community relations that simultaneously strengthen both parties. For each, self-interest is the primary inspiration for engaging in such a relationship. The self-interest of the university is its own institutional competitiveness. For the community, it involves an improved quality of life and a greater sense of efficacy. Given what can be viewed as a symbiotic characteristic of university-community relationships, it is likely that measurable improvements for one will positively impact the other. However, for this to occur, both parties should engage in the relationship from a position of strength, in order to assure that the interests of one do not overburden the interests of the other. As an intermediary, the Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC) seeks to enable this strength-based, self-interest inspired, mutually beneficial relationship.

Many urban institutions purposefully incorporate the language of community engagement into their missions and actively carry out service oriented programming as part of university-wide initiatives and individual course pedagogy. However, in spite of popular rhetoric and overall improvements in the quality and amount of university-community engagements, there are still critical areas where opposing interests can

cause the university and its closest neighbors to be at odds. The persistent dilemma is how to construct a relationship between the university and the community in which competing demands can be at least partially appeased. For the urban university, perhaps none of these is more salient than space.

Minor skirmishes for space occur every day between universities and their immediate communities. Examples include residential concerns and actions taken against impromptu student overflow parking, efforts to regulate and minimize the impact of university traffic on residential streets, and neighborhood association rules regarding loud music and large gatherings at rental units occupied by students. In these areas of concern residents assert their dominance over their domain by posting signs, having street parking regulated and traffic patterns changed, and through the use of neighborhood covenants.

Racial and socioeconomic class differences can work to magnify confrontations between the university and residential populations—particularly when skirmishes are not minor, but are instead, major confrontations about the permanent use and ownership of space. The examples of confrontations between Columbia University and Harlem (Bradley 2003) and Temple University and North Central Philadelphia (Hyatt 2010) further reveal that confrontations emboldened by social differences can lead to fractured university-community relations that are difficult to heal. Universities need space to grow, and people need places to live.

Institutional Competitiveness

In the 1930s, University of Chicago Sociologist, Robert Park, appropriated the concept of “invasion and succession” from plant ecology to describe the disruptive and harmonizing processes that occur as communities shift from one dominant population to another. In the case of spatial confrontations between universities and communities, land use (whether residential or institutional) is the primary contention. Universities have the ability to employ legal, financial, and institutional capital to appropriate once residential property as part of, or proxy to, a sprawling campus. This more immediate and comprehensive invasion can leave a community feeling assaulted. Where streets and homes once existed, individuals may feel a sense of loss as they view new populations of students and professionals, oblivious to their intrusions on the sites of cherished family memories.

In their quest for space, universities can be seen as logical actors striving to maintain institutional competitiveness in what has become a capitalist-oriented system of higher education. Universities must compete for students on many fronts that oft times have little to do with academic reputations. New student centers, state-of-the-art science and technology buildings, athletic facilities, and green space are part of the equation. However, a myopic focus on campus life and facilities can work to the detriment of surrounding communities, and ironically, the overall institutional competitiveness so earnestly sought.

A fixation on campus concerns without a clearly articulated agenda for constructive engagements with the surrounding community causes universities to appear as isolated institutions, scarcely concerned with the critical issues affecting the lives of their closest neighbors. The irony is that many of the urban issues that urban scholars discuss, research, teach about, and are positioned to respond to, are found in the immediate vicinity of the campus. Although there are noteworthy early precedents in the cases of Johns Hopkins University and the University of Chicago (Taylor and Luter 2013, 2), the aim of broadly connecting urban university missions to the critical analysis and engagement of urban problems found a notable advocate in Clark Kerr, a former chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, and former president of the University of California. Kerr proffered a new model for urban universities wherein universities took on urban problems as an “animating focus.” Modeling the origination of land-grant institutions, Kerr suggested the creation of government-aided, urban-grant institutions dedicated to working on urban problems (Schrum 2013, 328).

In years since, scholarly publications, university mission statements, and federal, state, local, and private initiatives have all confirmed a view wherein the urban university is encouraged and expected to take a leading role in ameliorating urban problems. The inherent dual missions of servicing students and addressing urban problems are not necessarily exclusive of one another; however, they do force the bridging of often wide social class and racial divides. While urban-based institutions of higher education often maintain a cadre of highly educated and cosmopolitan professionals who cater to largely middle-class student populations, many of the surrounding neighborhoods continue to suffer the effects of a deindustrialized economy and past housing segregation.

By embracing the model of the ‘anchor institution,’ university leaders enliven the charge issued by Clark Kerr so many years ago. This model challenges universities to take on leading roles concerning the issues prevalent in immediate and surrounding communities. In this model, community engagement is not simply a result of presidential initiative, altruism, or a perceived moral obligation due to the reliance on taxpayer-based funding; instead, community engagement is seen as a crucial component of institutional competitiveness. This broadened and more sophisticated view of institutional competitiveness looks beyond what amenities the freshman or transfer student might enjoy and focuses on the leadership role that a university can provide in the improvement of the urban community. The improved perception of the institution as a positive and organic entity, and resultant improvements in neighborhoods surrounding the campus, are understood to be attractive for students, employees, and funders.

Coppin State University (CSU) and the Coppin Heights Community

Like other HBCUs, Coppin State University was founded with an inherent public service mission. Including the practice of service learning in her commentary, Marybeth Gasman (2010) writes:

The lack of examples in mainstream service-learning books is not due to a lack of service on the part of HBCU's. These institutions are where many of the core concepts of service learning and civic engagement sprang. HBCU's, from their beginnings, have reached out to the community, providing a safe haven during Jim Crow and segregation, registering blacks to vote, sponsoring book drives and mobile libraries, feeding and housing nearby communities, and providing child care.

Beginning in 1900 as a training academy for African American teachers, the entity that became the Fanny Jackson Coppin Normal School, then Coppin Teachers College, Coppin State Teachers College, Coppin State College, and eventually Coppin State University, always had a public service mission at its center. Presently, Coppin State University is a residential campus offering a variety of undergraduate and graduate degree programs, and has a student body that consists of approximately 4,000 students largely from in and around Baltimore, Maryland. Still an institution serving a primarily African American population (89.7 percent), the university continues to focus on improving the conditions in the surrounding community. Notable programming to this end includes the operation of the Coppin Academy High School (a charter school located on the university campus) and a collaborative relationship with Rosemont Elementary School (a nearby Baltimore city public school).

As an institution, CSU is moving toward overcoming symptoms and effects of underdevelopment due to longstanding gaps in funding and facilities when compared to other universities within the Maryland state system of higher education. As recently as 2006, an independent group, the Coalition for Equity and Excellence in Maryland Higher Education, Inc., organized to file a lawsuit against the Maryland Higher Education Commission stating that "the state has failed to enhance Maryland's historically Black institutions; has failed to develop high-demand academic programs at these institutions and ensure that they are not unnecessarily duplicated at nearby universities; and, has failed to ensure that Maryland's public HBIs (Historically Black Institutions) are comparable and competitive with Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs) in facilities, operations and programs" (Hayes 2006).

Largely a result of an earlier agreement due to similar complaints made by the U.S. Department of Education on behalf of Maryland's HBCUs, an aggressive capital building campaign was already underway when the 2006 lawsuit was filed (Toll et al. 2001). These plans included northward and southward expansions of the campus, which nearly doubled the original thirty-eight-acre site. To date, much of this expansion has already occurred. To the north, several businesses were purchased and demolished for the construction of the new Physical Education Complex (PEC). To the south, the university crossed the main artery, West North Avenue, which previously served as the southern border. This area, having been primarily residential, required the purchasing of several blocks of Baltimore's characteristic town homes.

The new construction and overall enhancements are improvements upon what had grown to be a rather unappealing and inadequate campus. And, students and faculty

alike are very appreciative of the new facilities that are quickly being utilized to such an extent that academic space is still a contentious issue at the university. These new facilities also equip CSU with a larger capacity to institute community engagement programming. In fact, community approval was gained largely through the promise of potential community programming and use of facilities. However, in hindsight, some local residents are left wondering how they have benefitted from what have clearly been gains for the university.

Additionally, low graduation and retention rates have plagued the university to the extent that raising these rates is the primary concern of university leaders. Extremely tight budgets and enrollment management concerns detract from the ability to prioritize community engagement activities. Yet, the two are inextricably connected. An often-told story at the university is about an out-of-state student whose parents drove him to the campus. This student was academically gifted and had been offered a generous scholarship. The parents were, evidently, so negatively impressed by the appearance of the community and the university as they drove in, they decided to keep driving and to enroll their child at the other HBCU across town. The truth of this specific story is difficult to ascertain; however, it is not hard to imagine that it may have occurred.

CSU exists within Coppin Heights, a community challenged by persistent poverty, unoccupied and blighted housing, and a high rate of criminal activity. Still, committed long-term residents toil for the sake of their community through the auspices of their neighborhood associations. Their efforts are largely inspired by their knowledge of the neighborhood's potential, based on what they know it to have been in the past.

Like many neighborhoods in inner-city Baltimore, Coppin Heights was once a neighborhood consisting of an almost entirely white working class population. These families settled in Coppin Heights (then part of the Walbrook neighborhood) as homes were built in the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1950s, racial turnover (blockbusting) was quickly happening on a block-by-block basis in Baltimore. This process, although meeting the housing needs of an expanding African American population, was exploitative in that blacks were often led to pay high prices for older homes in neighborhoods with declining infrastructures in a city where much of the industrial base that sustained working class jobs was soon to disappear (Orser 1990).

This set the stage for the slow and steady economic decline of the Coppin Heights neighborhood. Reminiscing on the way things used to be, one resident reported being able to walk a whole block and not finding a piece of littered paper on the ground big enough to write one's name on. Yet, in spite of memories like these, and the efforts of some residents to strengthen their community and maintain quality services, an uncomfortable level of crime, blighted housing, and disenchantment persists.

Thus, the looming challenge concerns the development of a synergistic relationship between a struggling university and a distressed community that will (1) increase CSU's overall institutional competitiveness and (2) improve the lives and conditions of

local residents. Given the existence of cultural barriers between universities and their neighbors, what aspects of trust, accountability, and mutual self-interest must be understood by all in order to create a mutual exchange of power, capable of creating the internal and external engagement necessary for true transformation?

The Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC)

Established in 1995, the Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC) is a 501 (c) (3), independently governed organization created by Coppin State University Development Foundation in order to advance a community revitalization agenda. The following mission can be found on the university's website:

The mission of the CHCDC is to be a catalyst for suitable and affordable housing for low to moderate income residents and to stimulate economic development within neighborhoods immediately adjacent to CSU through the establishment of social, economic, educational, and affordable housing development initiatives that collectively increase the stability and sustainability of our community.

We will do this by:

- Coordinating partnerships between Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation, Coppin State University, government agencies, elected officials, public schools, social and community service organizations, businesses, and residents to ensure a community collaborative approach to meeting the needs of residents in the Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont community.
- Developing and improving affordable housing in the Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont community.
- Fostering economic and business development initiatives serving the needs of low to moderate income and otherwise disadvantaged Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont residents.
- Strengthening existing partnerships between Coppin State University and the broader community through support and coordination of the Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont Alliance Steering Committee (Alliance), a community-based collaborative established by the CHCDC to hear, consider, and make wise decisions around issues that fall within the following resident-identified priority areas:
 - Slum and blight removal
 - Community safety
 - Elimination of known health and educational disparities

- Promoting community awareness of events and issues important to the wellbeing of Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont residents.
(<http://www.coppin.edu/chcdc>)

Although the CHCDC has experienced several successes, a persistent issue has been access to funding. During the early years of the organization's history, overall resources for community development were ample. A growing economy fueled a growth in community-oriented funding; however, deterioration and blight were still on the advance in many of the urban neighborhoods immediately surrounding the majority of the nation's historically black colleges and universities. To the dismay of those working in these communities, revitalization efforts were decelerated by the dismantling of what many considered the lifeline of community revitalization for HBCU communities—the HUD-HBCU program sponsored through the HUD Office of University Partnerships. The program that directed close to 165 million dollars over fifteen years was cut by Congress, along with severe cutbacks in two other staple programs, the CDBG and HOME programs. This steep drop in resources made the task of sustainable community development very difficult and changed the nature of development productivity. In the light of funding challenges, understanding and shaping power dynamics between and among university and community constituencies has emerged as an important strategy to leverage resources in an austere environment.

Organizing for Power

A premise of this article is that in order for a healthy university-community relationship to exist, both the university and community must enter the relationship from a position of strength. For purposes here, strength is defined as the organizational capacity to articulate and affect an agenda based on self-interest. A core issue concerning power dynamics between institutions of higher education and challenged communities is the natural imbalance of power. CSU is a multi-million dollar institution supported by the state of Maryland. As an institution, it is composed of trained professionals who are paid to articulate missions and, to the extent possible, equipped with budgets and other necessary tools to affect the university's agenda. Community leaders, on the other hand, are working with minimal personnel (most of whom are volunteers) and almost no monetary resources. Fortunately, there is much power to be had in the organization of people, absent of money.

For the CHCDC, this natural imbalance of power presents several challenges. As an intermediary between the university and the community, the CHCDC must negotiate the power structure within the university in order to influence a perception of community engagement as vital to university success. Concerning the community, much work has been done to organize local organizations and to create a collective voice to articulate concerns. To this end, the CHCDC relies on a structure inclusive of a board of directors and a steering committee. The board of directors, charged with the fiduciary responsibilities for the organization, is composed of leaders from neighborhood organizations, and partnering nonprofit and public organizations (such as Baltimore Heritage, Inc. and the Maryland Office of the Public Defender). Over the

last four years, the CHCDC board has been led by a neighborhood leader who is an attorney and a teacher at a local middle school. His leadership has enabled the CHCDC to lift the image of the community from one of entitlement to that of a proactive, self-sufficient body. The steering committee, which functions as the venue in which the greatest concentration of grassroots community leaders are involved (although several of these leaders also serve on the board of directors), advises the overall direction and planning of the organization. Membership of the steering committee is drawn from the leadership of fourteen local neighborhood associations, and other community stakeholders.

The steering committee, in particular, functions as a venue wherein voices from local residents are heard. A premise to the formation of this entity is that a collective community voice, organized through the CHCDC as an intermediary, permits community organizations to be more powerful in affecting their agenda. Additionally, the steering committee functions as a community-based entity that can demand accountability from both the university and the CHCDC.

The GRAMA Plan

The Greater Rosemont and Mondawmin Area (GRAMA) master plan was approved by a vote of the Baltimore city planning commission on November 15, 2012, in an open community meeting held in Coppin State University's new Health and Human Services Building. Beyond planning commission members and university personnel, representatives from approximately twenty-seven neighborhood and community organizations (more than 160 individuals) were in attendance. These members represented their neighborhoods and organizations proudly with preprinted signs, reminiscent of state representation signage at a national political convention. Before the unanimous vote to adopt the plan, several individuals spoke in the open forum to the importance of their neighborhoods, about positive activities taking place, and positive changes that they would like to see. Planning commission members stated that they had never experienced such a high level of attendance for a similar event.

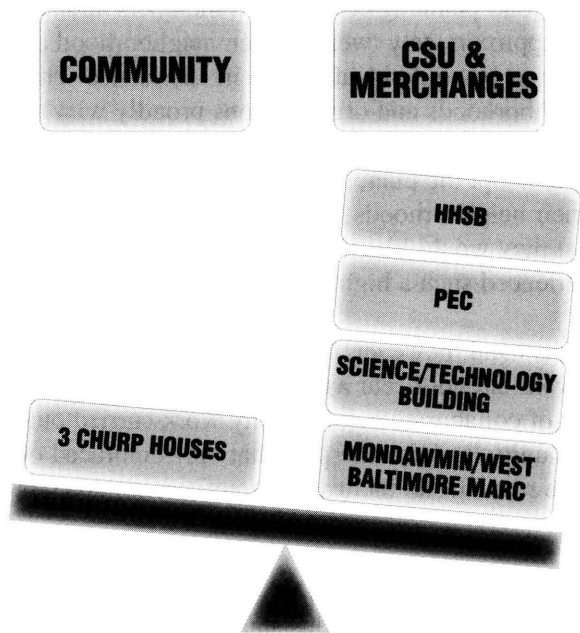
It is important to understand, however, that the overall organization of, and resultant attendance at, this event did not occur as an isolated incident of success. Instead, this was a result of years of collaborative community work carried out by CHCDC, university, and community leaders. The plan that they embraced on the night of November 15 was the result of an inclusive, sometimes arduous, process, as revealed in the Plan Vision:

This plan has been a work in progress for the last decade. A number of plans have come before it, existing in various stages of completion, and sponsored by a variety of community stakeholders. As time progressed, neighborhood leaders and institutional stakeholders began to recognize their shared community interests and concerns and became determined to work together toward a collective vision for the area that would benefit all. This plan is the culmination of their collaborative effort and envisions a community comprised

of safe, attractive, and marketable neighborhoods, which have ample access to retail, education, transit, public spaces, and recreational green spaces. It is a pedestrian-oriented place that promotes positive community activities and social interactions; and cultivates a comfortable connectivity and co-existence between residents, businesses, institutions, organizations, and area visitors. This envisioned Greater Rosemont and Mondawmin Area is a place where people want to live, work, and play (GRAMA, 7)

The major plan preceding the GRAMA Plan was the 2005 Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont Revitalization Plan (GCRRP). In 2006, the CSU and the CHCDC led efforts to transform this initial plan into the Greater Rosemont and Coppin Heights Master Plan (the GRACE Plan). This new plan increased the original plan boundaries, and incorporated more community input and additional “developments and initiatives” (GRAMA, 8).

The GRACE Plan, however, never benefited from organized, wide-scale community support strong enough to push the plan forward to the planning commission for approval. CSU and other large-scale public and private sector organizations were able to move forward with development-oriented projects that were identified in the plan; however, as the community was ineffective in its efforts to have the city agree to adopt the GRACE Plan as the master plan for the area, the contents of the plan that were primarily for community benefit did not manifest:



Community members saw several university-centered development projects from the original 2005 and come to fruition, such as the construction of the Health and Human Services Building (HHSB), the Physical Education Complex (PEC), the Science and Technology Building, and the renovation of the Mondawmin/West Baltimore Marc

transit station. However, actions primarily for the benefit of the community (such as the removal of blight and vacant housing from one of the major community thoroughfares, and the adaptive reuse of an historic neighborhood building as a mixed-use medical office building) had not occurred. The Coppin Heights Urban Revitalization Partnership, a CHCDC led effort, was successful in the full renovation and sale of three blighted row-homes on the main thoroughfare of West North Avenue, but given the scale of blight and associated problems this achievement (although significant as a precedent for future efforts) appeared as the proverbial “drop in the bucket.”

Thus, a lesson was learned concerning the importance of strength and organizing for power. As stated earlier, the university has a well-funded institutional capacity to affect change on its behalf. The community does not and must rely more heavily on the grassroots organizing of people in the face of minimal resources. Acknowledging this fact, in 2010, new leadership within the CHCDC focused on reviving efforts for the official adoption of the GRACE Plan. A critical component of this period of the planning process was CHCDC led efforts to increase awareness on the part of community leaders concerning the importance of their organized voices in making the aspects of the plan meant for their benefit come to fruition.

The GRACE Plan was renamed the GRAMA Plan in order to better reflect the community boundaries of the plan (GRAMA, 8). By the time of the planning commission vote, the plan had been vetted thoroughly by university and community leaders alike. Many evening and Saturday gatherings and informational sessions allowed for community input, and due to CHCDC efforts, much was received. The CHCDC strove to orchestrate a transparent process and has been successful in both opening more effective lines of communication between the university and the community. It is important to note, however, that what has been approved is a plan. Implementation will require watchful eyes and much continued work. The CHCDC, in its role as intermediary, will have to be responsible for implementation of the plan. In order to be successful it will have to approach this task from a set of disciplined strategies.

The Elements

In efforts to strengthen the community’s voice and ability to affect self-interest, CHCDC leaders focused on an approach broken down into five crucial elements:

1. The Plan
2. Articulated Agreements
3. Proven Track Record
4. Strong Partners
5. University Community Alignment

These elements are instructive for any organization involved in working in partnership with a local anchor institution to revitalize the surrounding neighborhood. As Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, “The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving” (Holmes 1960, 88). The CHCDC is clear about its direction towards sustainable community development and the importance of establishing a firm foundation. Much like establishing a firm foundation to build a house upon, these structural elements will play out differently in each local neighborhood and must be addressed according to the unique dynamics of each place. However, the overarching objective is power to affect desired change.

The Plan

The plan serves as a mechanism to create inclusion and investment on the part of all stakeholders. As it is a roadmap for neighborhood revitalization, each partner must see their vision, their benefit, and their goals, expressed in the plan in order to assure wide-scale buy-in and legitimacy. For the organization steering plan development, the most challenging component is likely to be achieving wide-scale neighborhood and community buy-in.

For institutions with clearly defined structures, gaining institutional commitment may be more a matter of getting a few directors and/or managers, or even one powerful official to be invested in the planning process. The job of organizing the community may be much harder as there is likely to be much less supportive infrastructure and organizational capacity. Community involvement and investment in the planning process must be gained on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood, door-to-door, phone call-by-phone call basis aimed at getting residents to the table and then sustained in the process. Planning must be supported by sufficient data and copious amounts of time allotted for the sharing of ideas and the vetting of concerns among stakeholders.

In the original Coppin Heights Greater Rosemont Revitalization Plan (GCRRP) developed during the years 2005–2007 the vetting process was done well. Due to the OCR agreement, the university anticipated capital infusion. From a moral standpoint, university leaders wanted to ensure that this infusion would also be of some benefit to its economically challenged neighbors. Thus, the university leaders supported the costs for a joint university and CHCDC led comprehensive planning process. Stakeholders involved in the planning process included representatives from the university administration, officials of the state and local government, private developers, architects, engineers and planners. Most importantly more than two hundred neighborhood residents participated at some point in time during the plan’s development.

Although this plan was vetted thoroughly and represented an almost \$60,000 investment, it lacked a stable champion due to the leadership instability within both the CHCDC and the university. Additionally, the resultant lack of concerted efforts to sustain neighborhood involvement challenged continuity as diffuse foci distracted from collective vision. Thus, two years after the plan was completed, it was still just on the

shelf, and few individuals in key leadership positions remembered, or were even aware of, the previous planning exercise.

Upon learning of the existence of the plan, and the substantial efforts involved in its creation, new CHCDC leadership championed efforts to update the plan and get all original stakeholders to recommit. In these efforts, the plan was utilized as an organizing tool with the overall goal of making the neighborhood plan serve as the basis of the city's master plan for Central West Baltimore. Thus, what was eventually renamed the GRAMA Plan was approved by a unanimous vote of the planning commission as the city's master plan for the area. The approval of the plan was a successful moment, but perhaps more important was the process itself—inasmuch as it established solid lines of communication between stakeholders, increased organizational capacities and individual commitments, and invigorated the energies and aspirations of residents in one of Baltimore's most challenged communities.

Articulated Agreements

For the implementation of any plan, it is important to specify exactly what things are to be done, who is responsible for doing them, and who is responsible for providing resources (money, personnel, materials, space, etc.). Resistance to formalizing these specific commitments will likely clarify the degree of commitment and/or capacity on the part of each party to follow through with agreed upon plans. In the case of the CHCDC, continued commitments are formalized annually through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CHCDC and the university.

In the effort to outline specific responsibilities, procedures for implementation of plans in similar communities may serve as instructive examples. The CHCDC was allotted the opportunity to research a similar community in a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of University Partnerships sponsored trip to St. Mary's College in San Antonio Texas. CHCDC leaders toured the campus and the neighborhood, met with the college president, neighborhood, and business leaders, faculty, and students. Although a brief observation, CHCDC leaders were impressed with what they saw as a truly committed group of partners with well-defined articulated agreements and outcomes. Encouraged by the prospect of replicating that model, CHCDC leaders returned to Baltimore and facilitated exchanges between the presidents of St. Mary's College and of Coppin State University.

The goal of this facilitated conversation was to secure the CSU president's participation in marshaling the resources of a vast array of partners around a plan with specific and articulated agreements. With the support of the CSU president, this partner network grew to include the Baltimore city mayor, and other corporate, foundation, and government organizations, and was formalized as the Coppin Heights Urban Revitalization Partnership (CHURP). For approximately one year the mayor's office convened all of the city agencies to sit at the table with the CHCDC for work on specific community development projects. However, the distraction of a successful re-election campaign and subsequent re-ordering of personnel, offices, priorities, and

strategies resulted in the mayor's office focusing on a broader anchor institution strategy in which her office was to partner more broadly with the major higher education and medical institutions to revitalize neighborhoods. Although the specific and more focused commitment to CHURP waned, the CHCDC leadership is content to be a part of the Baltimore Anchor Institution Plan and, through that model, continues to work with the city and the university on specific revitalization commitments with measurable outcomes.

Proven Development Experience

The momentum gained in the processes of expressing a collective vision and developing specific, measurable outcomes must be sustained. As a principle organizing body, the CHCDC brought stakeholders to the table to engage in collaborative, constructive discussion and planning. In the eyes of stakeholders, the value and integrity of the overall effort, and of the CHCDC itself, is tied to visible outcomes and deliverables. Proven effectiveness then spurs further investment on the part of stakeholders (whether those investments come in the form of money, relational, and/or political capital), as they more solidly link collaboration with the CHCDC as a vehicle through which identified goals will be met.

CHCDC acted on what they understood as a need to prove that the organization could successfully complete development projects. Toward that end, the CHCDC applied for and was awarded a HUD grant supporting the development of three units of affordable homes. Although small compared to the overall development called for in the GRAMA Plan, the completion of the homes inspired confidence in the capacity of the CHCDC and its will to follow projects through to completion. The building and sale of these homes now serve as examples to federal and local officials, and community residents alike, that the CHCDC is a viable vehicle for neighborhood revitalization.

Fundraising and successful grant writing are also integral components of the capacity, which a successful CDC must have in its sustainable community development arsenal. To this end, the CHCDC identified a historic building built in 1873 as an orphanage for young Jewish children. Although the University System of Maryland owned this building, the development strategy over the last decade appeared to the CHCDC leadership as "demolition by neglect." The vacant and deteriorating building did not present a viable option for adaptive reuse until the CHCDC partnered with a local historic preservation organization, Baltimore Heritage, Inc., to submit an application to the National Register of Historic Places to have the building designated as a historic landmark.

CHCDC leaders then spent more than a year conducting neighborhood meetings with residents to discover what use the community wanted to see for the building. It was no surprise that in the neighborhood with the highest healthcare disparities in the state of Maryland, residents wanted to see healthcare programming in the building. CHCDC then wrote a grant to Maryland's Department of Planning to receive historic tax credits towards the rehabilitation of the building. In a competitive process, the CHCDC won the state's highest tax credit award for 2011, approximately 2.5 million dollars to

develop the building into a Center for HealthCare and Healthy Living. It then raised an additional 7.5 million in new market tax credits and then competed for and won a State Community Legacy award of two hundred thousand dollars. Although construction has begun on the building, the planned behavioral healthcare clinic, dental clinic, pharmacy and related healthcare uses are far from completion, but the CHCDC has proven to its partners that it can be trusted to take on the task of revitalization in the neighborhood.

Strong Partnerships

Strong partnerships are essential to build the type of power necessary for sustainable community development. Every phase of the work that has been discussed was accomplished through mutually beneficial relationships with government, private organizations, and even fellow nonprofits. CHCDC leaders work from the perspective that every person, every agency, every organization has a series of goals and objectives which they must reach in order to ensure their existence. To ensure a strong partnership with that entity, CHCDC leaders strive to identify those relationships in which the strengths of the CHCDC may serve as asset to helping partners achieve their goals and objectives—inasmuch as they align with, or do not detract from, CHCDC goals and objectives.

The strength of the CHCDC's relationship with Coppin State University has varied depending upon the leadership of each of the organizations at any given point in time. In earlier years, the university allocated office space as an in-kind contribution to the CHCDC. However, as the attention of university leaders focused on budgetary shortfalls and concerns about retention and graduation rates, the leadership of the CHCDC worried that their relationship with the university was becoming more fragile. Thus, CHCDC leaders sought to be creative in trying to create lanes of reciprocity.

One potential benefit that the CHCDC could offer the university was the value in its established relationships with community organizations. CHCDC leaders strategically took on active roles as intermediaries between community organizations and the university's faculty and students. These relationships have proven valuable for faculty interested in providing community-based and service-learning experiences for students. With a growing constituency within the university structure identifying the university's relationship with the CHCDC as beneficial, the CHCDC's relationship with the university has been effectively strengthened.

University Community Alignment

Universities and communities, although inextricably tied, have competing priorities that are often revealed in the internal strategic planning process. For either entity, a planning process that is noninclusive and narrowly focused will likely manifest in further divisions that may, or may not be, surmountable. Given this importance, an alignment tool that CHCDC leaders have worked to utilize is university's strategic planning process.

Similar to what the GRAMA Plan outlines for the overall community, the CSU strategic plan outlines the goals and benchmarks for the growth of the university, and serves as a kind of roadmap to arrive at the improved university envisioned five to seven years in the future. As the CSU associate vice-president for external engagement was also serving as the executive director of the CHCDC, he was in a unique position to advocate for various elements of community engagement to be included in CSU's strategic plan. And, as groundwork has been laid for faculty, staff, and administrators to identify the value of community engagement for institutional competitiveness, additional community engagement advocates inform various aspects of the university's strategic plan. Alternatively, the CSU president, and small number of other university personnel, sits on the board of directors for the CHCDC. Thus, key CSU representatives are able to have sustained communication with the CHCDC board of directors and steering committee as ideas, reactions, and concerns from the community about its development manifest.

Conclusion

The challenge confronting the Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC) was, and continues to be, the development of a synergistic relationship between a struggling university and a distressed community that will (1) increase institutional competitiveness and (2) improve the lives and conditions of local residents. CHCDC leaders envision an overall "communiversity" uplift that does not displace and trade-out the existing Coppin Heights population for a more sophisticated one. University leaders envision an aesthetically pleasing university and surrounding community that adds to institutional competitiveness. Community members envision a safe community in which to live, work, and play—as some remember it to have been in the past.

Narrowly focused strategies developed in silos with little or no consideration for the issues affecting other parties would diffuse potentially powerful alliances that are, essentially, focused on the same goals. Having identified this as a potential pitfall, CHCDC leaders sought to create a situation wherein efforts motivated primarily by self-interests could be synergistically aligned. Broadly defined strategies to achieve this end revolve around five major elements: (1) The Plan, (2) Articulated Agreements, (3) Proven Track Record, (4) Strong Partners, and (5) University Community Alignment.

The most crucial foundational element is the plan. In this case, the plan championed by CHCDC leaders is the Greater Rosemont and Mondawmin Area master plan (the GRAMA Plan). The Baltimore city planning commission adopted the GRAMA Plan as the master plan for the area on November 15, 2012, with more than 160 neighborhood residents and representatives from community organizations present. Although the adoption of the plan was a crucial moment, the process leading to its adoption established solid lines of communication between stakeholders, increased organizational capacities and individual commitments, and invigorated the energies and aspirations of residents in one of Baltimore's most challenged communities. In these achievements, CHCDC leaders constructed the necessary collaborative relationships to engender success in future work.

As university leaders continue to define and actualize institutional roles as anchor institutions, strategies developed will involve careful consideration of unique factors in immediate communities and larger metropolitan areas. The broadly defined elements utilized by the CHCDC will be tailored to each circumstance; however, the importance of each element for successful development and engagement efforts will likely be revealed in each case.

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